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Letters to the Ice Box

Professor Discloses CIA Service

February 21, 1967

To the Ice Box:

This is a CIA type surfacing because I find the outcry of my friend Dan McIntosh nauseating.

My service with CIA extended from the beginning of 1951 to the summer of 1953. During that time I learned about activities such as the subsidizing of the NSA. My initial reaction was strongly negative. Slowly I became convinced that the international activities of organizations such as the NSA were essential and that these activities could not be carried out except by subsidy from CIA.

It is not difficult to demonstrate that in the years 1951-53 the activities were necessary; the alternative was to leave the field of international youth activities to communist and communist-front organizations, which were well financed. What was true of the NSA was true of other CIA

supported projects; without subsidy, they would collapse. And subsidy from private sources was not forthcoming.

My next argument is a tougher one to sell: CIA was the only government agency which could subsidize organizations such as the NSA without restricting or even ending their independence. Let me illustrate. Suppose the subsidy came from Health, Education and Welfare. Given the very vigorous civil rights and similar activities of NSA, what would have happened to a HEW budget which included funds for NSA?

Only CIA can subsidize without controlling, because only CIA has a budget which is not scrutinized, line by line, by congress. Therefore if anyone in the government, up to a cabinet member or even the president, wants to encourage some activity without impairing the independence of the activity,

his method is subsidy by the CIA.

Now let us look at the students involved. Dan McIntosh says: "It is terrifying to know that the CIA duped students and used them as spies." Isn't this rough on Mr. McIntosh's colleagues? I have known many young men who entered the service of CIA, men whose intelligence and moral strength was as great as that of Mr. McIntosh. They simply believed that their country was worth serving, and that they could serve their country by working in CIA. Many of the young men who worked with me in the agency in 1951 now occupy high posts in academic life, in other professions, and in policy-making branches of the government. They were not then, and they are not now, either dupes or morally depraved. Neither, I suspect, were the NSA officers.

When he was president, Herbert Hoover told a French diplomat that the United States should be in the world but not of it, and Secretary Stinson abolished the intelligence unit of the Department of State, remarking that gentlemen do not open other gentlemen's mail. All that is long ago. Since then there have been many impressive, indeed vital, triumphs for American intelligence. And there have been some horrible messes, many of them, like this one, proceeding from the assumption that American democracy can operate like British democracy. We can't. In Britain, if you publish official secrets you go to jail. Here you make the front page and can pass for a great moralist.

Oh well, we can't keep official secrets, but we've had few defectors. And we have many young men with brains and strong character who are proud to serve their country in the intelligence field. Fortunately, for our country's welfare.

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